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NEWS RELEASE NEWS RELEASE

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**OHS Reminds Drivers to Brake for School Buses and
Kids**

5 – 7 Year Olds Most at Risk

Dover – For the next several weeks, highway safety officials are reminding drivers to be on the lookout for school buses during their morning and afternoon commutes to work, and to stop when they do. During the summer months, drivers often forget about bus routes, bus stops and crossing zones, so they may become frustrated when they suddenly encounter the buses, which are slower moving than other vehicles and make frequent stops. This causes some to drive around stopped school buses, something school bus transportation officials say is a continuing problem in Delaware.

“They’re putting children’s lives at risk,” said Andrea Summers, Community Relations Officer for the Delaware Office of Highway Safety. “We’ve gotten reports from parents about cars that have nearly hit their children as they get off the school bus, by passing on the right or left.”

In the last decade, 202 children have been killed nationwide as pedestrians in school bus related crashes. Thirty-two percent of the children were hit by passenger vehicles as they got on or off the buses, and more than half of the victims were between 5 and 7 years old. The highest risk time for such crashes: between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

Penalties for passing a stopped school bus in Delaware are serious. They include a \$115 - \$230 fine or 1 – 2 months jail time for the first offense, and a \$115 - \$575 fine or 2 – 6 months in jail for the second offense. Additionally, a conviction for passing a stopped school bus will result in a 1 to 12 month driver’s license suspension, and six points on a driver’s record.

State law requires traffic on a two-lane road to stop in both directions when a school bus with activated lights and signs does. On a four-lane road, only traffic traveling in the same direction as the bus must stop when it does.

Drivers should get in the habit now of recognizing school zones on your way to and from work. Begin to slow down when you first see the bus, so when it starts its stopping procedure, you won't have to slam on the breaks. Don't start moving again until the red stop arm is withdrawn or the flashing lights are off. Watch out for kids who may not be paying attention as they cross the road. If you see someone passing a stopped school bus, try to get a vehicle description and their tag number and call 9-1-1.

Parents can help their children play it safe by going over the following rules daily: look before getting off the bus, look both ways before crossing the street, never cross before the bus driver tells you to, walk – don't run to the bus, and when possible cross at a crosswalk.

If drivers, parents, and children pay extra attention at the beginning of the year, they can make school bus safety a habit all year-long.